



Dengue Fever Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) HAWAII ISLAND OUTBREAK

15 December 2015

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Where on the Big Island are the cases located?

The investigation is still underway, and the Department of Health (DOH) is still investigating possible areas where cases may have been exposed to infected mosquitoes. Current investigations have identified South Kona (in particular Hookena and Honaunau) as an area of particular concern, but the entire island is considered to be at risk. ALL islands in the state should be vigilant and take measures to reduce mosquito breeding grounds.

Could it spread to the other islands?

Dengue is not normally present in the State of Hawaii, and it's important to keep the risk of dengue in Hawaii low. The mosquitoes that are capable of spreading dengue fever are present statewide; this is why, when we hear of suspect dengue cases (imported or otherwise), the department promptly does a thorough investigation to prevent further spread of disease. Regardless of where you are, though, it is a good idea to avoid mosquitoes and protect yourself from mosquito bites (see "How can you keep from getting it?" in [General Questions FAQ](#)).

Is it safe to travel to the Big Island and the rest of Hawaii?

Absolutely, yes. The Big Island and the rest of Hawaii remain safe destinations for visitors and residents. The current outbreak is very small by global standards, and minor compared to other popular tropical tourist destinations.

All travel involves at least some risk, but visitors can, in general, reduce their risk by protecting themselves against mosquitoes and mosquito bites by using mosquito repellent that contains DEET and covering up with appropriate clothing no matter where they go (see “**How can you keep from getting it?**” in [General Questions FAQ](#)). Precautions should especially be taken when going into areas where mosquito activity is likely.

How many cases have there been?

The investigation is still ongoing. We are still actively seeking cases, following up on reported illnesses, so the number of cases continues to change. Visit the DOH Dengue Outbreak 2015 webpage for updates and information (<http://health.hawaii.gov/docd/dengue-outbreak-2015/>).

Do I have the symptoms of dengue?

If you are concerned that you may have symptoms related to dengue (which can include fever, severe headaches, pain behind the eyes, joint and/or muscle pain, and rash), you should contact your healthcare provider and avoid further exposure to mosquitoes (see “**What are the symptoms of dengue fever?**” in [General Questions FAQ](#)).

If you are ill and are worried that you might have dengue fever, it is important that you be evaluated by a healthcare provider. Many of the initial symptoms of dengue can overlap with other conditions that require specific treatment (like leptospirosis); additionally, a small number of individuals with dengue can go on to have severe dengue (see below), and it is important that individuals with dengue be monitored by a healthcare provider to ensure that they are not progressing to severe dengue.

What type of dengue viruses have been identified in this outbreak?

There are four closely related dengue viruses (DENV 1, DENV 2, DENV 3, and DENV 4). The current 2015 Hawaii Island outbreak involves DENV 1 serotype virus.

Can I get tested for dengue?

If you are at all concerned that you might have dengue, you should contact your healthcare provider and avoid further exposure to mosquitoes.

If you were ill and more than a week has passed since the time of illness, an antibody test can determine whether you were previously infected with dengue. However, determining which dengue virus type you had is not possible after the first week of illness.

If you are ill and are worried that you might have dengue fever, it is important that you be evaluated by a healthcare provider. If you do not have a provider, please go to a community health center for care. Many of the initial symptoms of dengue can overlap with other conditions that require specific treatment (like leptospirosis); additionally, a small number of

individuals with dengue can go on to have severe dengue (see below), and it is important that individuals with dengue be monitored by a healthcare provider to ensure that they are not progressing to severe dengue.

If you think you might have had dengue recently, but didn't see a healthcare provider (or were not tested for dengue by your provider), contact DOH (see [“Who do I contact with other questions about dengue fever?”](#) on page 4).

Can I get mosquitoes tested for dengue? Can someone come and spray my property for mosquitoes?

Mosquito testing for individuals is not something that the DOH is able to offer. Department staff have been conducting on-going assessments for mosquito activity and may as a precaution be spraying in areas; DOH necessarily is prioritizing areas of concern identified through our investigations. However, everyone can help in reducing risk from mosquitoes around their homes and businesses (see **“What steps should be taken to reduce mosquito nuisance at home?”** in [Mosquitoes FAQ](#)). Individuals or businesses who additionally wish to have their property sprayed against mosquitoes may opt to use private pest control services.

What substance is used in the spraying of mosquitoes?

The spray that is used is Aqua Reslin, which targets live adult mosquitoes. Although we recommend that people and pets stay away from treated areas for several hours as a precaution, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has determined that the spray poses no health risk to humans or their pets.

Is the spray dangerous to my pets?

One of the active ingredients in Aqua Reslin can be toxic to fish, such as ornamental fish in ponds. The substance has been used as a flea treatment in dogs and cats, but as a precaution it is advisable to keep them away from sprayed areas for several hours.

What is being done to stop dengue from spreading?

DOH is actively conducting an investigation into identified cases, as well as working to identify additional cases and evaluate for on-going transmission of disease. Department staff are also conducting assessments of areas of concern for the presence of mosquitoes and may as a precaution spray areas specifically related to our ongoing investigation.

Just as importantly as the investigating and assessing, DOH, Hawaii County, and many other partners are reaching out to residents and visitors to *Fight the Bite!* by helping to eliminate mosquitoes and keep from getting bitten (see **“How can you keep from getting it?”** in [General Questions FAQ](#) and **“What steps should be taken to reduce mosquito nuisance at home?”** in [Mosquitoes FAQ](#)).

Can the Department of Health release the locations of confirmed dengue cases? I understand that the names of people may need to be kept private, but why can't the locations be disclosed?

We appreciate the desire to have precise information regarding locations, but many or most of the locations can be used to identify a person who is likely a patient, and patient confidentiality is something we must protect. Additionally, the location of dengue case locations does not

necessarily represent where each of those cases was bitten and infected. Maps of outbreak areas of concern can be found at: <http://health.hawaii.gov/docd/files/2015/12/dengue-info-map-20151202.jpg> and www.hawaiicounty.gov/active-alerts.

Who do I contact with other questions about dengue fever?

*If you have **general questions** about dengue fever, mosquito avoidance recommendations, or the ongoing Big Island dengue investigation, call Aloha United Way's 2-1-1 hotline.*

*If you are ill and are worried that you might have dengue fever, it is important that you be evaluated by a healthcare provider. If you do not have a provider, please go to a community health center for care. Many of the initial symptoms of dengue can overlap with other conditions that require specific treatment (like leptospirosis); additionally, a small number of individuals with dengue can go on to have severe dengue (see "**What is dengue fever?**" in [General Questions FAQ](#)), and it is important that individuals with dengue be monitored by a healthcare provider to ensure that they are not progressing to severe dengue.*

If you think you might have had dengue recently, but didn't see a healthcare provider (or were not tested for dengue by your provider), contact:

- Hawaii County: 808-974-6001 or 808-322-4880
- On other islands: DOH Disease Outbreak Control Division at 808-586-4586

*If you have **specific mosquito concerns** (on your property or elsewhere in your community), contact:*

- Hawaii County: 808-974-6001 or 808-322-4880
- City & County of Honolulu: 808-586-8021
- Maui County: 808-873-3560
- Kauai County: 808-241-3306